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Digital 'Taps' better than a boom box

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I read with interest, yet disagreed with, Michael Zitz's negative comments about fake buglers playing digital "Taps" at military funerals ["Fake buglers to play digital 'Taps,'" Sept. 14].

I agree that our veterans "deserve better" and ought to have a real bugler out there for their funeral service as it is the right thing to do, yet I opine the supply of buglers doesn't meet the demand (but I don't think it will be a problem at Quantico or Arlington, as Zitz alludes to).

Having done numerous funerals in a previous tour while working with the Marine Corps Reserve on what we call "independent duty" (we had a national cemetery on board our reserve base), we were elated when we had someone (military retiree, local musician, or a high school kid from the band) actually playing, even if missing a note or two.

More often than not, however, we resorted to using a boom box to play "Taps." We loved using the high school kids, but getting them out of school was always tough (maybe this is easier now post-9/11).

A while back when I heard about the "gizmo" being developed to help out those in need, I thought this would be a great help to those in areas not near major installations.

I applaud Bugles Across America and other groups--including former military and retirees--for their great and patriotic efforts in making the military funeral more fitting for those we owe. We would have loved this musical help out there with us in 1997-99.

In short, work hard to get the "real thing" into the military funeral. If not, be prepared for a military guy or girl out there doing his best to appear as if he is playing. It's not the greatest, but it's better than a soldier or Marine having to lean down to hit the play button.

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